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Accounting, Business Methods, Investments, and the Exchanges

Employment Psychology. HENRY C. LINK. (New York: The Macmillan Company. 1919. Pp. 440. \$2.50.)

"The future of psychology is so promising that ambitious promoters have already begun to capitalize it. There exists even now a large body of pseudo-psychological doctrine and literature which bears the same relation to psychology that nostrums bear to medicine. . . . The chief sign by which these quack psychological remedies may be recognized is that they uniformly promise a remedy which is speedy, infallible, and ready for instantaneous application." Thus Dr. Link recognizes the dangers of the recent popularization of psychology—dangers alike from imprudent zealots and impudent charlatans.

His book, exceptionally conservative in statement, sanely outlines the problems, material, and procedure of the employment psychologist, and describes with gratifying adequacy a number of employment experiments. His chapters on the scope of psychological tests, a scientific admission—or rather warning—of the limitations of the applied psychologist, exempt him from any accusation of hasty enthusiasm. Indeed, the book is thoroughly scientific in every detail: instead of *a priori* assumptions there is a tentative analysis; instead of the magic of a mystic psychology there is the experimental laboratory of trial and error; and instead of glowing subjective generalities there is an open statement of objective fact and correlation. Nor is the book a statistical catalogue or inventory of psychological tools. It retains the interest and attention by a happy admixture of facts and figures, description, and personal experience.

After displacing a somewhat popular notion that psychology is mind reading or an abstruse plunge into metaphysics with the scientific concept of psychology as the science of behavior, the author outlines the initial problem for the employment psychologist: (1) to get a general survey of the types of work in a given factory; (2) to make an intensive study of one or two operations; (3) to obtain, as experimental material, a large number of workers of the same kind; and (4) to work out tests for the most simple (and therefore most standardized) work. These four steps he proceeds to illustrate and amplify, as to both material and method, by use of concrete experiences of his own in the industrial field.

Although the book deals essentially with the problem of the selection of employees, Dr. Link does not neglect the fact that "to-day the training of new employees, keeping accurate records of their activities, transferring them when advisable, and devising methods of promotion, are all phases of the employment problem."

Dr. Link recognizes as well that the cognitive abilities are not the sum total of employment qualifications: that, on the one hand, there are required certain physical and psychophysical abilities, such as eyesight and hearing, visual and auditory perception and discrimination, motor accuracy and steadiness; and, on the other hand, many moral and emotional qualities, among them ambition, reliability, punctuality, honesty, loyalty, and tact. The admission that psychology has as yet devised no satisfactory test for these latter more protean characteristics is in no sense a confession of weakness, but, rather, a candid appreciation of the magnitude of a complete industrial measurement.

Perhaps hardly second to its admirable saneness and conservativeness is the practicability of this book. In addition to a complete description of tests and test procedure, there is valuable material on the technique of interviews, job analysis, personnel cards, the function of vestibule (or preliminary training) schools, the problem of defectives and illiterates, and the measurement of productiveness. An appendix of mental tests is consistent with the author's candor and completeness of presentation.

One criticism, in reference to the rather small number of subjects in the cases cited, is in part discounted, as Dr. Link implies, by the careful classification of employees and the large number of cross-correlations.

Dr. Link's *Employment Psychology* is rather alone in an important field. Both Gilbreth's *Psychology of Management* and Taylor's *Scientific Principles of Management* deal with the psychophysical problems of monotony, rhythm, fatigue, rest periods, and motion study; and Munsterberg's *Psychology and Industrial Efficiency* lacks the careful, intricate study and the complete, lucid practicability of this new book.

Psychology will be of increasing usefulness in its industrial applications despite its newness in applied fields. The employer who is sincerely progressive in his desire for human efficiency and industrial advance will at least take Dr. Link's book in attentive and thoughtful consultation.

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